

A mother called her child
Kissing his forehead
On his way to school.
For the boy
It was a normal day
Until the darkness came
And swept the light away.
We did not ask for this.
We did not ask to hear gunshots
In slamming doors and dropping books.
We did not ask
To witness the murders
Of the children
We played with at recess.
We did not know
That our teacher
Had taught us our final lesson.
And we believed her
When she said
The red spilling from her foot
Was only paint.
Sweet ignorance
The honey in our poisoned tea
The salt we mistook for sugar.
But where do we draw the line?
Between knowledge and ignorance
When do we know to cover our eyes
When the darkness
Begins to swallow us whole.
We united this country
By stating
“We are one.”
And on that principle
Our Forefathers said
You may “bear arms” to fight against them.
You may defend
Against them.

□ 1215

But who is this “them”?
If we are one
Who are we fighting against?
If we are one
Then who are we defending?
If we are taking lives to begin with
Because killing is still killing.
The number of lives lost
Is no victory
On our own soil
Or on any soil.
We say we are equals.
So who gets the power
To decide
Who lives and who dies?
Because by giving open access to these weapons
We are giving power
To trembling hands.
And these hands
Were the ones to take the life of the little boy
The day he was learning
How to read.
These machines were not designed for play.
They were designed to kill.
If we use them on the battlefield
If they can take a life
Then they are not worth it.
Because I promise you
A life is worth more
Than any machine
Used for fun.
Yet we bear these weapons.
We claim that we enjoy
The crack
At the end of the rifle.
Yeah, it may seem fun
On the other side.
But what if
You are on the opposite end?
Begging
Pleading
Crying out
For your life.
For the lives of your friends
For the lives of your classmates
For the life of your teacher.

We must be sure
Whose fingers we can trust
On the trigger
Because that choice
May determine
Your life
The lives of your friends
The lives of your family
And the lives of those you love.

Mr. Speaker, this is the voice of a child who has witnessed murder. How have we allowed this to become normal in America?

Geneva’s poem is beautiful, and she never should have had to write it. But this is the world that we live in: a world where NRA dollars drive decisions, sales for bulletproof backpacks are soaring, and 14-year-olds have seen their teachers and their friends die at school.

We must ban assault weapons. They have no place in our society. And we must ban high-capacity magazines. We need to hold gun manufacturers accountable for crimes committed with their guns and end the de facto ban on gun research. These are commonsense reforms.

As Marjory Stoneman Douglas student Emma Gonzalez said so pointedly: “We are going to be the kids you read about in textbooks, not because we are going to be another statistic about mass shooting in America, but because . . . we are going to be the last mass shooting.”

I pray that she is right. But it is Congress that needs to provide more than thoughts and prayers for a change. We must take action. That is our moral responsibility.

TARIFFS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, the year 1776 marked a turning point not only in American history, but in human history. While brave patriots here in America were affirming their right to equal representation and, ultimately, revolution, a Scottish philosopher named Adam Smith was revolutionizing the way we think about economics.

“The Wealth of Nations” was the book he wrote where he extolled the virtues of free markets and free trade, showing how all benefit from robust competition and an open marketplace.

Mr. Speaker, because of tax cuts and regulatory reform, returning to freer markets in this country, we have this economy off high center and growing at a rate we haven’t seen in over a decade. While some of my friends across the aisle would like to dispute this, the results speak for themselves.

Just last month our economy added over 300,000 new jobs and over 800,000 people joined the labor force, the largest 1-month jump in over 30 years. Mr. Speaker, people are looking for work, and they are finding work.

With the stock market, business, consumer confidence, and the labor

participation rate at all-time highs and the unemployment at a 50-year low, the last thing that we need and want to do is impose a new kind of government intervention to diminish the great economic progress we have made.

I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, that these tariffs that the White House and others have talked about, if not appropriately targeted, could do this and could have unintended, negative consequences on the American economy, on American consumers, and on hard-working American families.

The Texas delegation has a unique stake in this issue. For 16 consecutive years, Texas has been the top exporting State in the country with over \$264 billion in exports for 2017. So trade policy has a significant impact on our constituents. That is why last week my colleagues and I sent a letter authored by Ways and Means Chairman KEVIN BRADY to the President urging him to take a more measured and surgical approach in imposing tariffs. And I am glad it looks like that the White House and the President have heard and have heeded our pleas.

I believe in free trade, Mr. Speaker. I believe in open global markets. And it has improved standard of living for everyone. However, free trade only works if everybody plays by the same rules; that is, free trade and fair trade go hand in hand. For years, China has been gaming the system by dumping their product, infringing on our intellectual property rights, manipulating their currency, and circumventing trade agreements for years.

President Trump was right to call them out. He was right to hold them accountable. I am confident that we can work with the White House so that tariffs ensure fair competition and protect our national security interests while also making sure we don’t harm consumers here at home.

HONORING THE TOP 10 FEMALE HIP-HOP COLLABORATIONS OF ALL TIME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, throughout the years, artists such as Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, and Bruce Springsteen have been recognized on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Today I rise to honor the top 10 female MC hip-hop collaborations of all time.

Number 10: Eve, “My Chick Bad remix.”

Number 9: Monie Love, “My Buddy.”

Number 8: Missy Elliott, “Hot Boyz remix.”

Number 7: Remy Ma, “Ante Up remix.”

Number 6: Lauryn Hill, “Ready or Not.”

Number 5: Nicki Minaj, “Up All Night.”

Number 4: Da Brat, “Da B Side.”